

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 00979 300603Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----003778 300604Z /13

R 300420Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 0979

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4  
TAGS: SHUM SNAR LA AU FR UK  
SUBJECT: LAO AUTHORITIES COMPEL DETAINEES TO SIGN STATEMENTS

REF: VIENTIANE 0971 AND PREVIOUS

1. AN AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT JUNE 29 WAS GRANTED CONSULAR ACCESS TO JOHN EVERINGHAM, CORRESPONDENT ARRESTED BY LAO AUTHORITIES JUNE 23 (REFTEL). THE DIPLOMAT TOLD US THAT EVERINGHAM WAS IN GOOD CONDITION DESPITE SIX DAYS OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. HE WAS MOVED FROM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT ON JUNE 29 AND IS NOW CONFINED IN A GOVERNMENT-CONFISCATED CHURCH IN VIENTIANE ALONG WITH THE OTHER FIVE WESTERNERS ARRESTED WITH EVERINGHAM AT HIS HOUSE.

2. EVERINGHAM REPORTEDLY TOLD THE AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT THAT HE HAD SIGNED A CONFESSION WHICH CONTAINED FIVE CHARGES AGAINST HIM: 1) MAINTAINING AN INTELLIGENCE NETWORK; 2) USING AND TRAFFICKING IN DRUGS; 3) CORRUPTING THE MORALS OF LAO YOUTH; 4) ASSISTING REFUGEES

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FLEEING TO THAILAND; AND 5) POSSESSION OF "WEAPONS OF WAR".

3. EVERINGHAM ADMITTED TO THE DIPLOMAT THAT HE HAD 500 GRAMS OF OPIUM IN HIS HOME AT THE TIME OF HIS ARREST AND THAT HE HAD HAD RELATIONS WITH LAO WOMEN IN THE RECENT PAST. HE SAID THAT HE "CONFESSED" TO ALL

CHARGES, HOWEVER, AFTER HIS INITIAL REFUSAL BROUGHT THE LAO RESPONSE OF "HOW LONG DO YOU WANT TO STAY IN PRISON?".

4. THE DIPLOMAT ALSO SAID THAT THE OTHER FIVE WESTERNERS ARRESTED WITH EVERINGHAM WERE COMPELLED TO SIGN STATEMENTS AGAINST EVERINGHAM. A FRENCH DIPLOMAT TOLD US THAT ONE OF THE FRENCH NATIONALS UNDER DETENTION SIGNED LITERALLY AT GUNPOINT.

5. KHAMPHAY BOUPHA, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR FORSYTHE JUNE 29 THAT EVERINGHAM AND THE OTHER DETAINEES WOULD BE RELEASED FROM CUSTODY AND EXPELLED FROM LAOS "VERY SOON", THOUGH THE CHIEF OF THE SECURITY DETACHMENT GUARDING EVERINGHAM INDICATED TO THE AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT THAT EVERINGHAM WOULD ONLY BE RELEASED AFTER THE INVESTIGATION WAS COMPLETED.

6. SOMBAT CHOUNLAMANY, DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPED NATIONS IN THE MFA, REPORTEDLY TOLD THE AUSTRALIANS THAT THE LAO AUTHORITIES HAD A PHOTOGRAPH OF EVERINGHAM SMOKING AN OPIUM PIPE WHICH WAS BEING LIT BY RAY ORAM, ONE OF THE BRITISH NATIONALS UNDER DETENTION.

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7. THE AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT SAID THAT THE MOST THEY HOPED FOR WAS THAT EVERINGHAM WOULD BE EXPELLED SOON.

8. DESPITE EARLY RUMORS THAT EVERINGHAM WOULD BE ACCUSED OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CIA, AUSTRALIANS TELL US THAT NEITHER THE CHARGES CONTAINED IN EVERINGHAM'S "CONVESSION" NOR THE CHARGES AS LISTED BY SOMBAT IN DISCUSSION WITH THE AUSTRALIANS MENTIONED THE CIA.

9. COMMENT: AS WE NOTED IN VIENTIANE 0964, EVERINGHAM HAD BEEN RATHER CAREFUL IN HIS REPORTING NOT TO OFFEND THE LPDR. HOWEVER, WE GATHER THAT IN RECENT WEEKS HE HAD INDICATED TO VARIOUS NON-COMMUNIST FOREIGNERS IN VIENTIANE THAT HE WAS BECOMING SOMEWHAT DISILLUSIONED ABOUT THE SOVIET AND VIETNAMESE ROLES IN LAOS. WE HEAR THAT ONE WESTERN AMBASSADOR WARNED HIM HE WAS TALKING TOO MUCH. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE LPDR LEARNED OF HIS CHANGING ATTITUDE EITHER THROUGH THE RUMOR MILL OR THROUGH SURVEILLANCE TECHNIQUES AND DECIDED TO CRACK DOWN ON HIM WITH CRIMINAL CHARGES, INSTEAD OF SIMPLY EXPELLING HIM, IN ORDER TO DIMINISH THE CREDIBILITY OF ANY SUBSEQUENT UNFAVORABLE REPORTING HE

MAY DO.

9. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT REPEAT TO CINCPAC, CIA AND  
DIA.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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